



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS

Members

Mel Katz, Chair

Matthew Hervey • Susan Atkins • Susan Lew • Judy McCarty • MaryAnne Pintar • Katie Sullivan

May 2, 2007

Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

Re: Proposed FY 2008 Library Department Budget

The Board of Library Commissioners is writing to inform you that, given the difficult funding issues facing the City of San Diego this year, we are appreciative of the fact that no libraries will be closed, nor will operating hours be cut in FY 2008. In fact we are looking forward to the fall when the North University Community Branch Library opens, with full staffing that was added to the Library's budget in FY2007 and is continued in this year's proposed budget.

We are also grateful for the additional funds budgeted to support information technology at the Library. The new integrated library system will provide significant improvements both for the public and for staff. The purchase of 21 self-check machines will enable patrons to check out their own library materials (as 70 percent of patrons are currently doing at the new Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Branch Library), and will help to offset the impact of staff reductions. Additionally, the money appropriated for the Library Department in the newly centralized information technology budget offsets the overall Library Department budget reduction. This allows the Library to retain its Public Library Fund grant from the State of California by meeting the maintenance of effort requirement.

The FY 2008 proposed budget does reduce Library staffing levels by a net total of 36.60 positions, with approximately 67 percent of those positions currently being vacant. Although improved technology will help to mitigate the impact of the reductions, management will need to closely monitor activity levels in order to ensure that service to the public is maintained.

Although we are not formally requesting any increase in funding at this time, if additional funding were to become available, the priorities of the Board of Library Commissioners would be the addition of youth services librarians and an increase of the City match for the Library Matching funds from \$1 million to \$1.5 million. This public-private partnership is currently being utilized to purchase books, material, equipment and to sponsor programming in our libraries. The library's development team has been successful in exceeding the \$1 million threshold each of the last three years, and an increase to this fund would be of significant benefit to the library system.

Sincerely,

Mel Katz, Chair

Katie Sullivan, Commissioner